

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 941

By Favors

A RESOLUTION to recognize and congratulate the congregation of Rock Island Missionary Baptist Church on the occasion of the church's 150th anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this General Assembly should recognize those venerable religious institutions and their congregations that, through unflagging capacity for love, dedication of spirit, and faith in God, enrich the lives of people in their communities; and

WHEREAS, the good people of Rock Island Missionary Baptist Church in Chattanooga comprise one such congregation that has stood in service to the Lord and their community for 150 years; and

WHEREAS, in the early days of the Civil War, concerned Christians in the eastern geography of present day Chattanooga gathered under a brush arbor and held prayer meetings; because of their observed faithfulness to pray and commune with God, they were given a tract of land by land owners south of Chickamauga Creek between the Southern and W&A railroads on which to build a church; and

WHEREAS, time passed, and when the original land donors passed on, their heirs wanted the church meetings to be relocated elsewhere. The congregation divided and formed five separate churches around the area; and

WHEREAS, following this division, Rock Island Missionary Baptist Church established over a large area of East Chattanooga, and the church's name was taken from the name appearing on the railcars of the Rock Island Railroad that passed daily by its doors; and

WHEREAS, several pastors served Rock Island Missionary Baptist during the 1900s, including Reverends Dudley E. Moore, Sami D. Sanders, Louis Brooks, A. L. Jarrett, J. A.

McCullough, Dr. N. E. Douglas, and O. D. Whiteside, whose tenure was a remarkable thirty-three years. Each pastor led the membership to different levels of spiritual and economic growth and accomplished vital needs of the individual members and the congregation as a whole during their respective pastorates; and

WHEREAS, during the civil unrest of the 1950s and 1960s, the church building was burned twice, and safety concerns eventually dictated relocation; in 1963, the congregation purchased land and relocated to 2106 Camden Street, which is Rock Island Missionary Baptist's present location; and

WHEREAS, from 1966 until June 30, 1999, the church was led by Reverend O. D. Whiteside, and by his guidance, many souls accepted Christ and lived for the Lord. The facilities improved, a new sanctuary was constructed in 1983, a bus ministry was established, and the congregation was bountifully blessed in myriad ways; and

WHEREAS, in September 2000, Pastor Ronald B. Cook, Sr. of Atlanta, Georgia, obediently answered the call of God to lead Rock Island Missionary Baptist Church, and the blessings have since continued to flow to the congregation. The building is beautiful and welcoming, and the choral program has reached angelic heights, giving an exciting dimension to their worship; and

WHEREAS, for one and one-half centuries, people have been coming together praising God, beseeching His forgiveness, and earnestly desiring His blessings under the awnings of Rock Island Missionary Baptist Church, even in its first days under the protection of a simple brush arbor; and

WHEREAS, it is wholly fitting that this legislative body pause to recognize this Chattanooga church and its congregation on the auspicious occasion at hand; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby recognize and congratulate Rock Island Missionary Baptist Church on the occasion of its 150th anniversary, commend the congregation for their faithful service, and extend to them our best wishes for continued success in every future endeavor.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.